



The Sixty-fourth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,551st Concert

Geir Draugsvoll, *accordionist*

Presented in connection with the
Norwegian Christmas Festival at Union Station

December 4, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)

De profundis (1978)

Geirr Tveitt (1908–1981)

Two Inventions for Accordion

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565

Arranged for accordion by Geir Draugsvoll

Traditional Norwegian Folk Dances

Arranged for accordion by Tor Christian Faugstad

Hop Dance

Bridal March

Halling

INTERMISSION

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)

Holberg Suite

Arranged for accordion by Geir Draugsvoll

Per Nørgård (b. 1932)

Anatomic Safari (1967)

The Musician

Geir Draugsvoll is internationally recognized as one of the foremost living accordionists. He was born in Voss, Norway, in 1967 and studied at the Royal Academy of Music in Copenhagen with Mogens Ellegaard. Draugsvoll combines a busy concert schedule with teaching at the Royal Academy and at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz, Austria. His repertoire of works for solo accordion and orchestra includes works by Sofia Gubaidulina, Astor Piazzolla, Luciano Berio, Gyorgy Ligeti, Aki Takahishi, Edison Denisov, Arne Nordheim, and Vagn Holmboe, and he has been invited to play these unusual works by such orchestras as the Camerata Roman, the Hamburg Camerata, the Kremerata Baltica, the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, the Moscow Soloists, the Norwegian Radio Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra, and the Trondheim (Norway) Solistene. The long list of world-class musicians who have performed with Draugsvoll includes James Crabb, David Geringas, Dan Laurin, and Martti Rousi, and the equally long list of prestigious venues in which he has played includes the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, the Konzerthaus in Berlin, and the Musikhalle in Hamburg.

A champion of new music for his instrument, Draugsvoll has commissioned and premiered works by Bent Lorentzen, Moens Winkel Holm, Klaus Ib Jørgensen, Staffan Mossenmark, Jesper Koch, Gunnar Valkare, Jacob ter Veldhuis, and Andy Pape, among others. His recordings on the Simax, DaCapo, EMI Classics, and Phono Suecia labels have received consistently enthusiastic reviews. Geir Draugsvoll appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Pro Arte International Management of Bergen, Norway.

Program Notes

Thanks to the efforts of Geir Draugsvoll and a few other classical accordionists, the accordion is experiencing a second genesis on the concert stage. Its initial period of widespread popularity came not long after the first accordion to feature a piano-style ivory keyboard was produced in Vienna in 1863. Organists, in particular, were pleased to have a portable instrument on which to play, and transcriptions for the accordion of works for the pipe organ were common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among the many changes that occurred in music after World War II, transcriptions and the instruments on which they were commonly played fell out of favor, and the accordion was relegated to popular and folk music.

Accordion historians trace its roots back to the *cheng*, an instrument that was already known in China in 3,000 BCE. It was the first known instrument to use the free-vibrating reed principle, which is the basis of the accordion's sound production. The *cheng* had between thirteen and twenty-four bamboo pipes, a small gourd that acted as a resonator box and wind chamber, and a mouthpiece. The *cheng* attracted the attention of European musicians and craftsmen after being taken to Russia around 1770. In the 1820s the German instrument maker Christian Friedrich Buschmann (1775–1832) invented mouth-blown instruments of the free-reed family. Buschmann added bellows and a button keyboard to make his “Handaeoline,” the first clearly recognizable forerunner of the modern accordion.

The accordion first appeared in Norway around 1850 and soon gained favor in rural areas. During the 1870s the instrument increased in popularity, and by 1880 there were some well-known players, among whom the most highly regarded was Edvard Mathisen (1850–1900). The accordion was extremely fashionable in the early 1930s but then began to decline. Nevertheless, the most famous Norwegian accordionist of the twentieth century, Toralf Tollefsen (b. 1914), flourished from the late 1930s onward. In 1936 he played in Great Britain for the BBC, and he was invited to return in 1947 for concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra at Royal Albert Hall.

The first work featured in this program is by a Russian composer residing in Germany, Sofia Gubaidulina, who first studied at the Kazan Conservatory, graduating in 1954, and later studied composition at the Moscow Conservatory with Nikolay Peyko. In 1969 and 1970 she worked at the Moscow experimental studio for electronic music and was a member of the Astrea improvisation group. She has been the recipient of numerous prizes and awards, including the Koussevitzky Prize (1990 and 1994), the State Prize of Russia (1992), the Kulturpreis des Kreises Pinneberg (1997), the Praemium Imperiale, Japan (1998), and the Preis der Stiftung Bibel und Kultur (1999). Philosophical, spiritual, religious, and poetic ideas often serve as the impetus behind Gubaidulina's works. She believes that religion and music share a common goal, namely of "restoring the legato of life, re-ligio." Gubaidulina's Tatar extraction and her birth in the Tatar Republic have had a profound effect on her work, which has been regarded as a synthesis of various elements of Eastern and Western tradition. Gubaidulina's Western orientation is evident in her choice of Latin, Italian, and German texts and titles; it is frequently the case that a work's title sums up its content and meaning.

Geirr Tveitt was born in Bergen and studied in Leipzig and in Paris under Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959). Tveitt was a dedicated collector and arranger of folk music from the region along the Hardanger Fjord in western Norway. Misfortune was no stranger to Tveitt. His hand-built studio overlooking the Hardanger Fjord was destroyed by snow in 1960, and his house burned to the ground in 1970, incinerating almost 80 percent of his notes and scores. An unusual feature of his musical output is that much of it is built on the Lydian, Dorian, and other modes, rather than classical major and minor tonalities.

Per Nørgård is one of the most original artists in the cultural life of Denmark. His work as a composer, teacher, and theorist through almost half a century has had an enormous significance for the development of contemporary Danish art music. Nørgård has written works in all categories, for amateurs as well as for professionals, and he is considered a pivotal composer in Central European modernism. His occupation with new structural approaches led to the discovery of the so-called infinity row, a serial system or musical growth principle, which can be compared to the symmetrical formations of nature. Nørgård is known for continuously breaking with his own traditions. His ironic pastiches and beauty-seeking metaphysics of the 1970s gave way to works strongly inspired by the schizophrenic artist Adolf Wölfl in the 1980s and were followed in the 1990s by experiments that Nørgård calls “tone lakes.”

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

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